

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief John R. Batiste



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State Patrol Employee Completes 48 Year Career



After 48 years of service, William (Bill) Dretke retires as the State Patrol's most senior active duty employee. Born in Plummer, Idaho, Bill's family relocated to Rosalia, WA., where his father served as Chief of Police. After graduating from Rosalia High School, he worked in a Texaco service station where he met a trooper who told him, "You should pursue a career in the State Patrol." Taking the Troopers advice, he applied for a position and was subsequently hired as a Communications Dispatcher in the fall of 1957, assigned to the State Patrol's Kennewick office.

Dretke had a brief break from the Patrol, when he was drafted and served in the U.S. Army from 1961 until 1963. After discharge, Bill resumed his career working in the State Patrol's Communications Centers in Spokane, Seattle, Port Angeles and Mount Vernon.

During his career, Dretke says he saw communications change dramatically. Early on, all communications were handled by radio or mechanical teletype machines. "There were no computers." "All records and communications logs were typed on a manual typewriter or written out by hand." Records checks involved somebody in Olympia receiving your teletype request, looking up the information by hand and then teletype it back too you. The information was then passed to the trooper by radio. Dretke remarked, "This could take a long time." Dretke went on to say that by the end of his career, "Officers can now run data checks and wanted persons checks from their patrol car and have the information back in seconds, where it had taken thirty or forty minutes in the past."

In 1983, the Patrol consolidated it's communications into eight regional centers and Bill was assigned to the Everett District Headquarters. The District headquarters was relocated to a new facility in 1994, near Marysville. Rain or shine, Bill commuted everyday for the next 22 years from his home in Burlington, WA to Everett and finally Marysville.



(From the right: State Patrol Chief John Batiste, presenting Bill and Barbara Dretke a retirement plaque and awards)

Bill retired as a Communications Supervisor at the Marysville Office on September 9, 2005, after 48 years of dedicated service.

Bill and his wife of 46 years, Barbara, are looking forward to retirement and plan to travel visiting relative and friends around the country.

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